Wm Gardner Exploration

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William, Archibald Robert Gardner and company returned to G. S. L. City from an exploring expedition along the Weber and Provo rivers. Following is Bro. Gardner's account of their trip:

"Thursday, Sept. 2, 1852. In company with my brother William Gardner and J. D. ~~Parks I left the city~~ at 2 o'clock p.m. and traveled that night as far as Bro. Barnards.

Friday, Sept. 3. We continued the journey to the mouth of the Weber River, where we arrived about noon. We then traveled up the river which we found good for floating purposes, but pretty rough for a road. After going four miles we came to a place where the rocks were perpendicular on the north side of the canyon and by a short turn the river strikes the south bank. Here the road would have to cross the river, and it is the only place where the river is obstructed by rocks and then only for about ten rods. In a week a man could blast the rock sufficient to make a road. About three miles above this place we came to the mouth of the north branch which has a large channel, but is dry at the present time, and there is no timber in [illegible] except cottonwood. Here is some beautiful land and an extensive ra[illegible]ror stock, with

Copied Thur 3-7-91 by RRGreenMD

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splendid facilities for irrigation. Through this country a road could easily be made, but there will be some trouble in floating on account of sloughs in time of high water. ~~This same diffidulty is~~ found in many other places and this is practically all the inconvenence that would be encountered in floating timber down the Weber River.

Saturday, Sept. 4. We continued our journey through a beautiful valley for about six miles; the flats here are about one mile wide and the soil is rich; fine groves of cottonwood are found all along the river; the upland consists of extensive rolling land and low mountains, completely covered with excellent grass for pasture. Back from the valley a few miles, on the face of the high mountains and in ravines, a considerable quantity of fir timber easy of access was seen. Here we struck into a beautiful valley at the mouth of the West Branch which runs along the back of the second mountain. The valley seemed to be from two to three miles wide, extending to the mountains on each side of the river, and about five or six miles long, and running up the west branch some two or three miles. We named this valley Gardners Valley. It affords fine facilities for a settlement. The surface of the valley is smooth, and the soil excellent and grass good. The west branch comes in from the south above the level of the valley and can easily be carried around the foot of the upland, gradually descending to the main stream; hence easy for irrigation purposes. This is also the case with the main river, the banks of which appear to be only four or five feet high. The facilities for extensive pasture and an abundance of wood was particularly noted. At the upper end of this stream we came to a narrow place, not over half a mile wide from mountain to mountain, and for ~~about~~ a distance of about a mile it was completely covered with cottonwoods. Here the road will have to be made along the foot of the mountains on the north side, but as the rocks are loose and easily moved, it can be kept on the flats about half the distance through the narrows. Continuing further up the river we struck a little valley two or three miles long; [illegible] half miles

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Sunday, Sept. 5. We continued our journey up the river for about four or five miles and came to a tributary of the river on the north side, nearly half as large as the main stream. No timber was in sight, As the mountains looked low and there was an Indian trail going up this tributary, I think a road could be made up this fork easier than along the main stream, as the next four miles the Weber River flows through a narrow pass, shut in close by high mountains, still on account of loose rock and soil it would not be very hard to make a road. Having passed through these narrows, we came in sight of covered wagons crossing the Weber at the lower crossing some five miles off. We continued our course up the river to a small stream on Parley's Road, about three miles south of Echo Canyon, and camped until the rest of the company came up.

Monday, Sept. 6. We started eastward on foot to explore the mountains until the other boys came up, At sundown David Parks came up with his wagon, some provisions and bed clothing, bringing with him also Solomon Wixom and John Larson to go with us into the mountains; they had left home on the Sabbath morning.

Tuesday, Sept. 7. In the morning we started up Parley's road all well armed on horseback and in good spirits, while David Parks returned with his team. We came to a branch of the river on the north side some four or five miles from our camp as large as Big Cottonwood. It issued forth from low mountains, where there was no appearance of timber except cottonwoods on the flats and in some places quaking asp on the mountains. The day was cold and rainy. We camped on a small stream, large enough for a mill, and had a bear hunt as we lacked fresh meat. We succeeded in killing a bear within 20 rods of our camp and we named the stream Bear Creek.

Wednesday, Sept. 8. We crossed a low point where the Weber River takes a square bend coming out of the mountains on the east, The Weber River from where we first [illegible] bend where

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Wednesday, Sept. 8. We crossed a low point where the Weber River takes a square bend coming out of the ~~mountains on the east~~, The Weber River from where we first saw the wagons up to the bend where the valley connects with the Provo River and the Weber River, the distance is about 30 miles. At this place the valley is covered with a good deal of cottonwood timber and a road could easily be made about six miles up the river above the bend. The flats are covered with a great quantity of cottonwood, the grove, in some places being half a mile wide. At length we came to a narrow place, where for a distance of two miles considerable work would have to be done in order to get a road through. Cottonwood timber is plentiful. After traveling about 3 miles on

low bench covered with sage brush, we camped upon a willow flat.; for about 15 mile the land here is covered with willows and some other timber. The low bench abounds with sage brush and grass. The pasture facilities here are consiquently splendid. The flats skirting the river are about a quarter of a mile wide. At this region the river is so straight that a good road can be made for about 15 miles without crossing the stream. A number of small streams come in from the north, but they are easily forded. On the south side of the valley there is considerable timber on the mountains, principally balsom and pine.

Thurs. Sept. 9. Before starting from Willow Flats this morning, I in company with J. D. Parks made a trip up through the fir timber to the top of a low chain of the mountains and found the timber rather small; scarcely any of the trees were more than 20 inches in diameter. We looked over into a canyon with a stream large enough to turn a mill. it empties into the Provo River about three miles below this place. The firs among the north side of the mountains seem to be plentiful. About 3 miles above our camp another stream comes in on the south, The water in which at the present time is not more than would be needed for a saw mill. Judging from appearance, it would be large enough in times of high water to float timber from points many miles back in the mountains, considerable fir timber was in sight. We camped for the night on a little bottom at a place which we named Beaver Town, from the number of damns and houses made by the Beaver. This place is about 25 miles above the head of the Weber. Here the river is divided into 4 heads to it: The north Fork with water enough to turn an over shot wheel. The main fork with water enough at present to run the Jordon Mills. The middle fork with little more than half as much as the main fork, and the south fork with less water than any of the other forks at present, but it looks as if it could have a good amount of water at the time of snow melting, judging from the size of its channel and the rocks washed down in the creek bed.

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Friday, Sept. 10. We divided into two companies and left the horses, as we could not take them any further. Myself and Solomon Wixom took up the main stream, while Wm. Gardner, J. D. Parks and John Larson went up the middle ~~fork~~. Along the main stream for about two miles we found the timber to be small, mostly Norwegian pine, from 8 to 15 inches in diameter. We then came to ~~what~~ that kind of timber which Snyder calls White pine; it is the only large timber found on the Weber and resembles

somewhat eastern spruce, many of the trees are and from one to three feet in diameter. We continued the journey up the river about 8 miles and found the conditions favorable for building a road. There would be no necessity for to cross the stream, the flats being nearly half a mile wide and all covered with timber, which is About half of it white pine of good size. There is but very little balsam or Salt Lake pine. At this point we left the stream, which contained water enough to turn Neff's mill. It has a large rocky channel and looks rather scaly for floating purposes, although it must be large some seasons. We ascended the mountain on the north side, and discovered that we were only about 4 miles from the head of the river. The timber covered flats continued close to the divide. A good road could be made from Beaver Town to the head end of the stream, the distance being about 12 miles. On the opposite side of the mountain, which is covered with timber, we traveled in a slanting direction up the mountain to the top; in several places the climb was pretty steep, but we arrived at the top after traveling 3 miles. Here we had a splendid view of the Salt Lake Mountains, and our vision covered a distance of about 200 miles north and south, but the Bear River Mountains obstructed our view on the northeast as they are a higher chain. Here the north fork, the main fork and the middle fork heads within a few miles of each other, being divided from the head waters of Bear River or as I suppose a Branch of it, by a very high mountain that rises far above the rest in two round summits without any vegetation above the level of the mountain upon which we stood. We called them the Bare Mountains. Below us was the Bear River Hollow completely covered with fir timber, and I rolled a large rock down into a small lake about a thousand feet below where I stood. We now turned our course to go down the north fork; here about 400 feet below us was a flat, containing some 2000 acres covered with small timber, cheifly Norwegian pine. A man can see nearly half a mile through it as it is open and no underbrush, trees varied from 8 to 15 inches in diameter. In this region there are several small mountain lakes [illegible] to 50 acres

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of the timber, but 9/10 is rather small timber where it divides into two mouths about a mile apart. For about two miles of the last of the canyon is wide and all covered with quakenasp. The report of Wm. Gardner and Co., is nearly the same as ours, with the exception that the large timber commenced at the mouth or forks of the canyon, through which they passed and the canyon was not very wide, but the creek was more favorable for floating and equally good for making a road up the south fork, except that the slops from the top of the mountain to the canyon is steeper than on the main fork. There are no lakes at the top of that stream. At the point where the different branches meet, there is a flat of several hundred acres consisting of marshy land, mostly covered with timber and long grass. From this place down the stream for about 15 miles there is a continuous growth of quakenasp timber all suitable for fencing purposes. We all met at our camps tired enough to go to bed without supper.

Saturday, Sept. 11. We started on our return journey and camped about half way between the Weber and the Provo rivers on the east side of what we call Round Valley. On a stream about as large as Little Cottonwood. We called this stream Fox Creek, as we shot at a red fox at this point. This stream is beautifully arranged to water this valley; I believe it sinks before it gets half way to the Weber but comes in on the highest part of the valley.

Sunday, Sept. 12. We continued our journey and traveled south until we struck the Provo river, distance about 6 miles. Here the Provo is nearly as large as the Weber where we last crossed it. We turned down the stream and followed it in a northwesterly direction for about five miles to a point where it turns into the mountains. Here we got up on an eminence and obtained a full view of both streams, both up and down. We could see the whole valley which is from 12 to 15 miles long and from 3 to 5 miles [illegible]. The west side looked very fertile. A great quantity of cattle [illegible] on the Provo as

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of any ~~amount~~ account is above this point such a channel would bring all the timber of both streams into the Utah lake, and thence down to the city by water all the way. With the unanimous consent of the company, I started home from this point, going down the Provo river for the purpose of ascertaining whether it was practicable for floating. I followed the road some 12 or 15 miles down the river and struck a valley which we supposed to be seven by ten miles in extent with two large streams coming from the south into it; about half as large as the main stream, and as the valley inclines to the main stream, the water from these tributaries by taking it out where they enter the valley could easily be carried over any part of it for irrigation purposes. One stream on the north is as large as Big Cottonwood and would water that side. This we called Williams's Valley as Mr. Williams camped in it five years ago. Our attention was attracted by mounds about the size of a coal pit to one that appeared to be about ~~a miles~~ off, and which we judged to me about a quarter of a miles across and 60 feet high; they are all about the shape of a coal pit, perfectly hollow. We supposed them to be a volcano, as the surface of the ground for some miles was covered with this light stone the same as the mounds; but finding some of them full of warm water, we concluded that the formation was made by the water. We camped within about five miles of the mouth of the Provo canyon, or ten miles from the lower part of Utah Valley. From this place up to Connection Valley the distance is 25 or 30 miles, and ~~here~~ a road could easily be made all the way.

Monday, Sept. 13. We continued the journey down to Utah Valley and noticed two large streams coming in on the south and one on the north. The last ten miles travel was pretty rough, but a good road could be built without much trouble by cutting into the side hill at different places, only loose rock being in the way and the Provo River is as handsome ~~as~~ a ~~stream for~~ floating purposes as could be desired; it is not so rapid as the Weber River and the channel is deeper, but

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be about 100 miles, good roads could be made without much expense except the last ten miles and the streams can also be utilized pretty well for floating down timber. We arrived home Monday night September 13th in good health having had a pleasant journey."

(Orig on file)
Robert Gardner

2 SEP 1852

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Thursday, Sept. 2

Gardner, William Gardner and J. D. Parks left G. S. L. City on an exploring trip. The object of which was to explore along the Weber River for timber and for floating the same down the river and also to ascertain whether a road would be practicable from the mouth of Weber Canyon to the Emigration road at the mouth of Echo Canyon.